

Codex Alimentarius Standards, Ongoing Work, and Cooperation with the OIE

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OIE International Conference on Animal Identification and Traceability

“From Farm to Fork”

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Organización
Mundial de la Salud



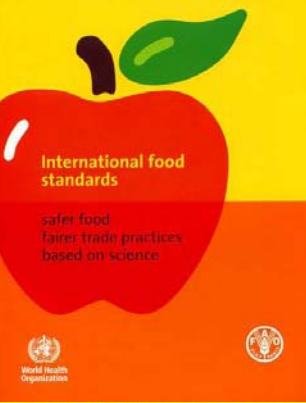
Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Agricultura
y la Alimentación

Codex is:

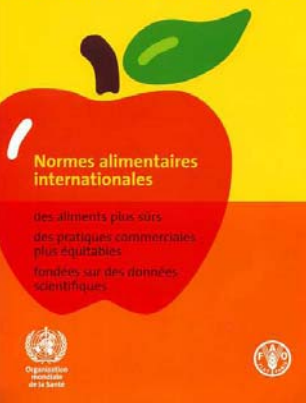
- Intergovernmental body
- Established in 1961/63 by FAO and WHO
- Headquarters in Rome
- Membership: 180 members countries and 1 economic integration organization
- More than 200 observer organizations



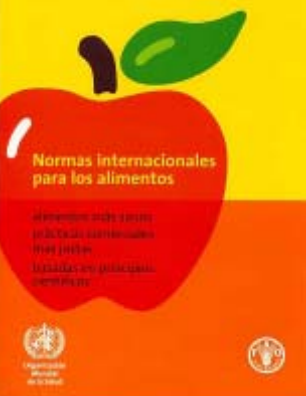
CODEX ALIMENTARIUS



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Codex Alimentarius - Objectives -

- Dual objective:
 - Protecting the health of consumers
 - Facilitating fair practices in food trade
- Coordination of all food standards work

CODEX IS NOT PROMOTING TRADE AS SUCH - THIS IS WITHIN THE MANDATE OF WTO

Organizational Chart

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION			
Executive Committee		Secretariat	
General Subject Committees		Commodity Committees	
General Principles (France)	Methods of Analysis and Sampling (Hungary)	active	
Food Additives (China)	Pesticide Residues (China)	Milk and Milk Products (New Zealand)	Processed Fruits and Vegetables (USA)
Contaminants (Netherlands)	Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods (USA)	Fish and Fishery Products (Norway)	Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (Mexico)
Food Hygiene (USA)	Food Labelling (Canada)	Fats and Oils (Malaysia)	
Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (Australia)	Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (Germany)	adjourned	
		Sugars (United Kingdom)	Meat Hygiene (New Zealand)
		Cereals, Pulses and Legumes (USA)	Vegetable Proteins (Canada)
		Natural Mineral Waters (Switzerland)	Cocoa Products and Chocolate (Switzerland)
<i>ad hoc</i> Intergovernmental Task Forces			
Antimicrobial Resistance (Republic of Korea)			
abolished			
Biotechnology 1-2 (Japan)		Animal Feeding (Denmark)	
Fruit and Vegetable Juices (Brazil)		Processing and Handling of Quick Frozen Foods (Thailand)	
Regional Coordinating Committees			
Africa (Ghana)		Latin America and the Caribbean (Mexico)	
Asia (Indonesia)		North America and the Southwest Pacific (Tonga)	
Europe (Switzerland)		Near East (Tunisia)	



Codex Standards

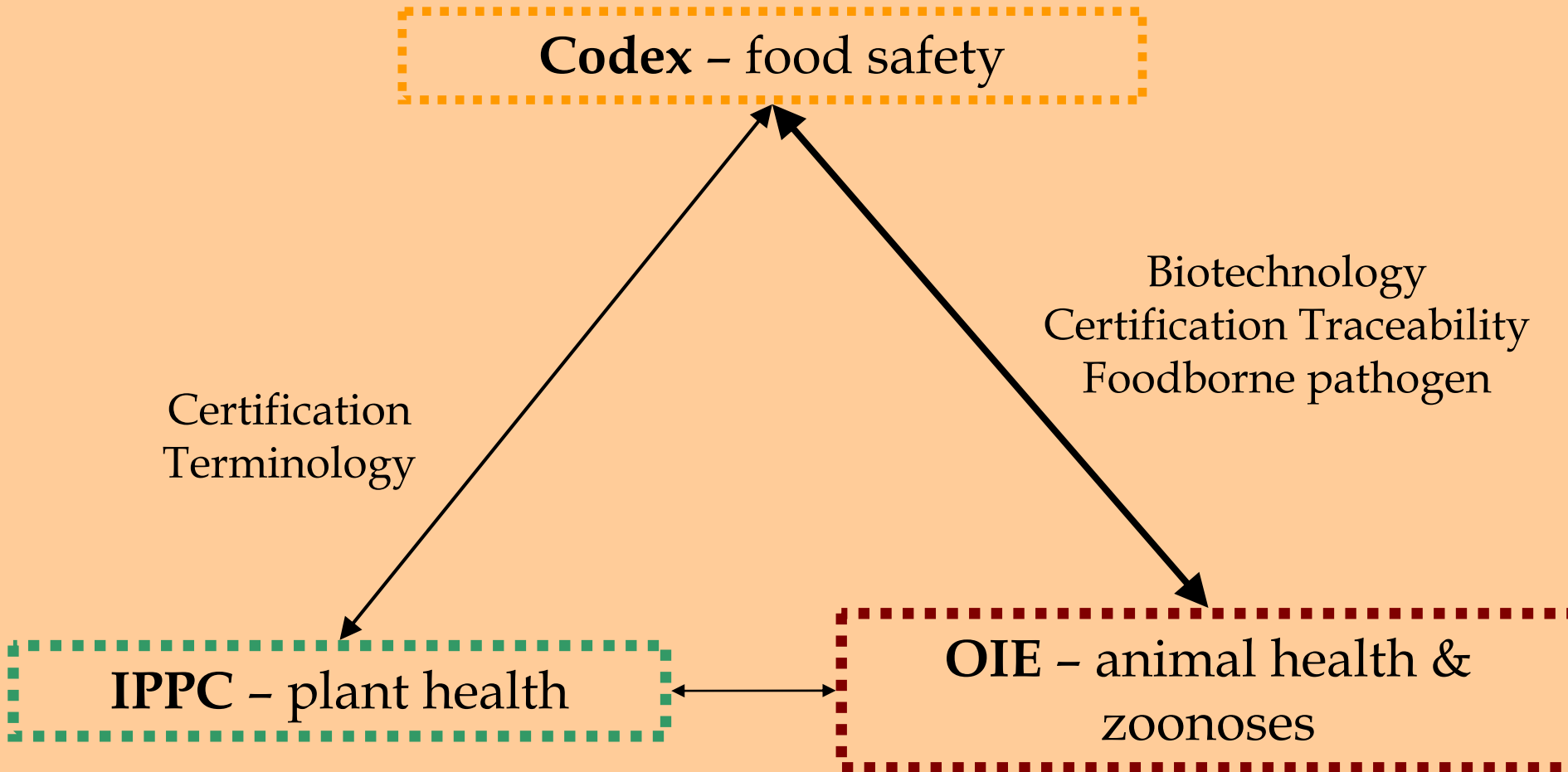
- Non-mandatory in nature
- Usually adopted by consensus
- Reference for governments and policy-makers, serving as a basis for national regulation
- International benchmarks for food trade, under the SPS and TBT Agreements of WTO

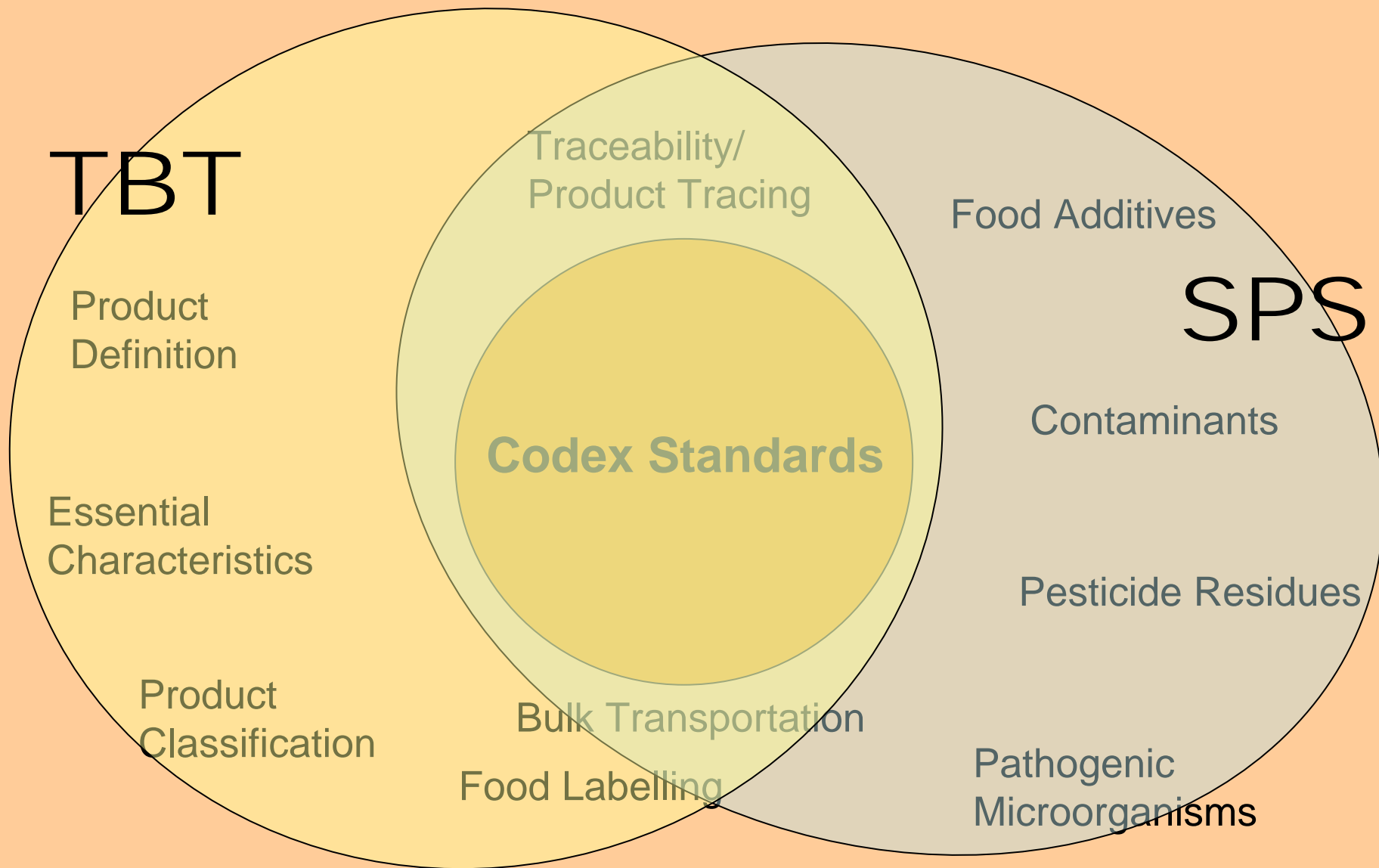


Codex, OIE and the WTO

- **Codex** standards, guidelines and recommendations are specifically recognised in the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (“SPS Agreement”) as the international benchmarks for food safety
- **OIE** standards, guidelines and recommendations are specifically recognised in the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (“SPS Agreement”) as the international benchmarks for Animal health and zoonoses
- **Codex** standards, guidelines and recommendations are relevant under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (“TBT Agreement”) as the international benchmarks for all matters other than SPS

“Three Sisters” under the WTO SPS Agreement





Traceability/product tracing - how it started -

The FAO's *Melbourne Conference on International Food Trade Beyond 2000*

agreed that

traceability was an important control factor in the
production of foods.

ALICOM 99/25: Report of the FAO Conference on International Food Trade Beyond 2000: Science-Based Decisions, Harmonization, Equivalence and Mutual Recognition, Melbourne, 11 - 15 October 1999, FAO, Rome, 1999. para. 100.



Earlier work in Codex

- Traceability/product tracing were explicitly or implicitly recognized in a number of adopted Codex texts, despite the fact that there was no official Codex definition.
- In most cases it was linked to product identification and recall procedures, such as in: *General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods* (CODEX STAN 1-1985) and in the *Code of Practice - General Principles of Food Hygiene* (CAC/RCP 1 – 1969)



1999-2005

Substantive discussions took place at the Commission, Executive Committee, various Codex Committees, Task Forces and Workshops on:

- Concept of traceability/product tracing
- Definition
- Implications for Codex and member Governments



Traceability

- a tool, not an objective -

Traceability is **not** an **objective** in itself, **but** rather a **tool**, which may assist countries to demonstrate that imported and/or exported foods meet safety and/or quality requirements.



Traceability/product tracing – its purpose -

Concept could be applied:

- for **food safety** (falls under the WTO SPS Agreement)
- for ensuring **fair practices** in food trade (falls under the WTO TBT Agreement)



Traceability (SPS-related)

Protecting the health of consumers :

- Help to identify, trace and effectively and rapidly remove unsafe foods at any stage of the food production and distribution chain.
- Facilitate identification of the source of the food safety problem.

A tool of risk management



Traceability (TBT-related)

Ensuring fair practices in the food trade :

- Help to protect consumers against deceptive practices and fraud in the market place and unsubstantiated product claims.

Such as:

Labelling of country of origin, geographic indication

Specific quality or product differentiation (e.g. organic, irradiation, GMO)

Definition

Traceability/Product tracing - the ability to follow the movement of a food through specified stage(s) of production, processing and distribution

Developed by the 20th Session of the CCGP (2004) and adopted by the 27th Session of the Commission



Principles for traceability/product tracing (CAC/GL 60-2006)

- Developed by CCFICS (2000-2005)
- Set of principles to assist competent authorities in utilising traceability/product tracing as a tool within their food inspection and certification system that may be applied, when and where appropriate in order to contribute to the **protection of consumers against food-borne hazards** and **deceptive marketing practices** as well as the **facilitation of trade** on the basis of accurate product description



Principles (1)

- The document should be read **in conjunction with all relevant Codex texts as well as those adopted by OIE and IPPC** where appropriate
- It should **not be mandatory** for an exporting country to replicate (i.e. establish the same) traceability/product tracing tool as used by the importing country, when applicable
- Traceability/product tracing is a tool that when applied in a food safety context **does not in itself improve food safety outcomes** unless it is combined with appropriate measures and requirements. It can contribute to the effectiveness/or efficiency of associated food safety measures

Principles (2)

- Traceability/product tracing is a tool that when applied within a food inspection and certification system **can contribute to the protection of consumers against deceptive marketing practices and the facilitation of trade on the basis of accurate product description**
- In every case a traceability/product tracing tool should be justified within the context of the food inspection and certification system and the **purpose, objectives and specifications of the traceability/product tracing tool clearly described**. The scope and extent of application of the tool should also be consistent with the described need

Principles (3)

- The traceability/product tracing tool **may apply to all or specified stages of the food chain** (from production to distribution), as appropriate to the objectives of the food inspection and certification system
- The traceability/product tracing tool should be able **to identify at any specified stage of the food chain from where the food came** (one step back) **and to where the food went** (one step forward), as appropriate to the objectives of the food inspection and certification system
- The objectives, scope and related procedures of a food inspection and certification system that includes a traceability/product tracing tool **should be transparent and made available to competent authorities** of the exporting country upon request



Principles (4)

- The application of traceability/product tracing should take into account **the capabilities of developing countries.**
- If in the context of a traceability/product tracing tool an importing country has objectives or outcomes of their food inspection and certification system which cannot be met by an exporting country, the importing country should consider the **provision of assistance to the exporting country, and especially in the case of a developing country.**



Principles (5)

- A food inspection and certification system within which a traceability/product tracing tool is applied **should not be more trade restrictive than necessary**
- A traceability/product tracing tool within the context of a food inspection and certification system **should be implemented when and as appropriate on a case by case basis**



Codex texts incorporating elements related to traceability/product tracing

- **Food Safety Risk Management - including Recall and Investigation**
 - *HACCP*
 - *Animal feeding*
 - *Meat Hygiene*
 - *Egg and egg products*
 - *Fish and fishery Products*
 - *Milk and milk products*
 - *Quick frozen foods*
 - *Infant formula*
 - *GMOs*
- **Product Processing**
 - *Canned Foods*
 - *Food irradiation*
- **Country of Origin and Lot identification**
 - *Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods*
 - *Fish and fishery Products*
 - *Prevention of aflatoxin contamination*



Future work in Codex

- No further work is currently ongoing in Codex
- Further guidance needed?
- Risk of creating unnecessary barriers to trade?
- CCFICS in November 2008 recommended to defer consideration of this subject to a later time.



Codex/OIE collaboration to avoid gaps in the food chain

- **Information exchange** → Submission of information documents; attendance at meetings; OIE's APFSWG
- **OIE contribution to Codex standards setting and Codex contribution to OIE standards setting** → Cross-referencing between Codex and OIE standards; ensuring consistency between Codex and OIE standards
- **Enhanced coordination at the national level** → Between Codex Contact Point and OIE Focal Point (CVO); Coordination between ministries

Conclusions

- Consistent and cost-effective application of traceability/product tracing throughout the food chain
- Matching purpose and means – avoid unnecessary trade barriers
- Implementation of Codex standards under the responsibility of member states and international organizations (FAO, WHO etc)
- Coordination of work between Codex and OIE at:
 - International and national level

FAO/WHO Food Standards

ENGLISH | FRANÇAIS | ESPAÑOL

CODEX alimentarius

ABOUT CODEX MEETINGS AND EVENTS OFFICIAL STANDARDS



Welcome

The Codex Alimentarius Commission was created in 1963 by FAO and WHO to develop food standards, guidelines and related texts such as codes of practice under the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme. The main purposes of this Programme are protecting health of the consumers and ensuring fair trade practices in the food trade, and promoting coordination of all food standards work undertaken by international governmental and non-governmental organizations.

NEWS

CAC31 REPORT

The report of the 31st Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission is now available in: English, French and Spanish.

GSFA ONLINE 2008

The updated version of the GSFA Online, incorporating the outcome of the 31st Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, is now available on Codex website in English, French, Spanish and Chinese (**new**).

Codex E-Learning

A new e-learning course for enhancing participation in Codex has been launched. Please follow the new link on the right-hand side of this page.

Warning: This is the only official website of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Unofficial websites using similar domain names (URLs) exist. The information contained in unofficial websites is not guaranteed by the Codex Alimentarius Commission nor by FAO or WHO and in no way commits the Commission, FAO or WHO.

Some publications appear in PDF format. These should be read with Adobe Acrobat Reader®. Click the icon to download, install and use this software.



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RELATED CODEX LINKS

- JECFA
- JMPR
- JEMRA
- Biotech assessment
- Expert consultations
- FAO/WHO trust fund for participation in Codex
- Codex E-Learning
- FAO Guide on Conduct of Plenary Meetings
- FAO: General Rules

EXTERNAL LINKS

- WTO
- OIE
- IPPC
- IPFSAPH
- STDF

More information at:

www.codexalimentarius.net



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